

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for establishing communications between a calling party using a telephone connection and a called party using an instant messaging client, comprising:

receiving a telephone call connection request from the calling party; and

5 establishing end-to-end voice communications between the telephone connection and the instant messaging client.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client processes voice signals between the calling party and the called party.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the called party participates by voice communication via the instant messaging client.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client receives voice signals from the called party and sends the voice signals to the calling party via the telephone connection.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the instant messaging client receives voice signals from the calling party and provides the voice signals to the called party.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call connection request is directed to the instant messaging client.

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7. A method for establishing communications between a calling party using a telephone connection and a called party using an instant messaging client, comprising:

receiving a telephone call connection request from the calling party;

determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications; and

5 responsive to the determining whether the instant messaging client is to receive voice communications, establishing end-to-end voice communications between the telephone connection and the instant messaging client.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the determining whether the instant messaging client is  
10 to receive voice communications comprises using a profile associated with the instant messaging client.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the determining whether the instant messaging client is  
to receive voice communications comprises using a profile associated with the called party.

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10. The method of claim 7, wherein the determining whether the instant messaging client is  
to receive voice communications comprises receiving an indication from the called party as to the  
called party's ability and desire to receive voice communications via the instant messaging client.

20 11. The method of claim 7, wherein the determining whether the instant messaging client is  
to receive voice communications comprises receiving an indication from the calling party as to the  
calling party's desire to establish voice communications via the instant messaging client.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the end-to-end voice communications are established via a gateway.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the gateway interfaces between a telephone network  
5 coupled to the telephone connection and a packet-switched data network coupled to the instant messaging client.

14. A method for establishing communications between a calling party using a telephone connection and a called party using an instant messaging client, comprising:  
10 receiving a telephone call connection request from the calling party; and  
establishing end-to-end voice communications through a network gateway between the telephone connection and the instant messaging client.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the gateway interfaces between a telephone network  
15 coupled to the telephone connection and a packet-switched data network coupled to the instant messaging client.